

State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”



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Contact: Spencer Dove
6 Saint Paul Street, Suite 900
Baltimore, MD 21202-1631
Phone: 410-767-8576
Email: spencer.dove@maryland.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LANDLORD FOUND IN CONTEMPT FOR VIOLATING CIRCUIT COURT ORDER AND DECISION OF THE MARYLAND COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS' APPEAL BOARD

MCCR Continues Pursuit of Justice for Victim of Unlawful Sexual Harassment in Housing

HAGERSTOWN, Md. – On November 23, 2020, the Circuit Court for Washington County found landlord Henry T. Piper in contempt of court for refusing to provide documentation to the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR), for failing to pay ordered penalties and relief, and for failing to attend fair housing sensitivity training.

The Appeal Board of the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights originally ordered Mr. Piper to pay \$5,400 in monetary relief to his former tenant, as well as a \$10,000 civil penalty to the State of Maryland on February 2, 2018, after it was found that he violated Maryland's fair housing law by sexually harassing his former tenant. Previously, the Maryland Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) had issued a similar order for relief and \$5,000 in a civil penalty to the State of Maryland.

The Commission continued to pursue court action against Mr. Piper over the last two years in the name of justice for both the complainant – who has yet to receive awarded relief for her pain and suffering as a victim of unlawful sexual harassment – as well as the people of the State of Maryland. He refused to comply with orders from OAH, the MCCR Appeal Board, and the Circuit Court of Washington County. The landlord's willful disregard of the court's order resulted in his incarceration for ten days, including over the Thanksgiving weekend.

Assistant General Counsel Terrence J. Artis, who litigated this case on behalf of the Commission, affirms, “Should any person or entity be found to have violated the civil rights of any Marylander protected under the Commission's statute, the Commission will exhaust all enforcement tools available under the law in the pursuit of justice for the complainant and people of the State of Maryland.”

MCCR represents the interest of the state to ensure equal opportunity for all through enforcement of Title 20 of the State Government Article and Title 19 of the State Finance & Procurement Article, Annotated Code of Maryland. MCCR investigates complaints of discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations and state contracts filed by members of protected classes under federal and state law. For additional information, please contact Spencer Dove at 410-767-8576 or by email at spencer.dove@maryland.gov.

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